

Amendments to the Claims:

This listing of claims will replace all prior versions, and listings, of claims in the application:

Listing of Claims

1. (Presently Amended) A customer self-checkout system for processing items for purchase, comprising:
 - a checkout station configured for self-checkout by customers of items for purchase;
 - a plurality of supervisory terminals comprising stored program instructions that configure the plurality of supervisory terminals to conduct supervisory activities administering operation of the checkout station; and
 - a controller operatively coupling the plurality of supervisory terminals to the checkout station, wherein said controller comprises stored program instructions that configure the controller to enable communication of requests from a checkout station to multiple ones of a plurality of supervisory terminals by sending signals from said controller to one or a multiplicity of said plurality of supervisory terminals, and to enable supervisory activity administration of the checkout station by multiple ones of the plurality of supervisory terminals and to enable an arbitration function to determine which supervisory terminals of said one or a multiplicity of said plurality of supervisory terminals conducts supervisory activities on said checkout station

wherein the supervisory activities comprise a plurality of supervisory functions that administer operation of the checkout station;

a first one of the supervisory terminals conduct supervisory activities consisting of a first subset of the supervisory functions;

a second one of the supervisory terminals conduct supervisory activities consisting of a second subset of the supervisory functions; and,

the first and second subsets of the supervisory functions are different and the arbitration function selects the supervisory terminal to perform the supervisory activity based on the subset into which the requested supervisory activity falls.

2. (Previously Amended) The system of claim 1, wherein:
the checkout station is one of a plurality of checkout stations;
the plurality of supervisory terminals includes a local terminal is one of a plurality of local terminals, each local terminal mounted adjacent to a corresponding one of the plurality of checkout stations;
the controller is one of a plurality of controllers;
each of the plurality of controllers is associated with a corresponding one of the plurality of checkout stations; and
each of the controllers is operatively coupled to the plurality of supervisory terminals.
3. (Previously Amended) The system of claim 1, wherein:
the checkout station is one of a plurality of checkout stations;
the plurality of supervisory terminals includes a local terminal is one of a plurality of local terminals, each local terminal mounted adjacent to a corresponding one of the plurality of checkout stations;
the controller is operatively coupled to each of the plurality of checkout stations; and
the controller is configured to administer control of the plurality of checkout stations by multiple ones of the plurality of supervisory terminals.
4. (Previously Amended) The system of claim 1, wherein:
a first one of the supervisory terminals is operatively coupled to the controller by a wireless data network; and
the controller and the checkout station are operatively coupled to each other by a wired data network.

5. (Original) The system of claim 4, wherein a second one of the supervisory terminals is operatively coupled to the controller by a wired data network.
6. (Original) The system of claim 4, wherein the first supervisory terminal is a battery operated mobile supervisory device.
7. (Previously Amended) The system of claim 6, wherein the first supervisory terminal is pocketable pager-size supervisory device.
8. (Previously Amended) The system of claim 7, wherein the pocketable pager-size supervisory device comprises a vibrating indication device.
9. (Original) The system of claim 1, wherein a first one of the supervisory terminals comprises a card reader configured to clear a weight violation at the checkout station in response to a reading of an authorization card.
10. (Original) The system of claim 9, wherein the authorization card comprises a transponder card.
11. (Original) The system of claim 9, wherein:
the checkout station is one of a plurality of checkout stations; and
the first supervisory terminal is dedicated to conducting supervisory activities over a first one of the plurality of checkout stations.
12. (Cancelled.)

13. (Presently Amended) The system of claim 1 12, wherein:
at least one of the plurality of supervisory functions is common to the first and second subsets
of the supervisory activities.

14. (Withdrawn) A method for providing supervisory support in a customer self-checkout
system, comprising:

monitoring operation of a checkout system;
detecting a request for supervisory activity at the checkout station;
transmitting the request for supervisory activity to a plurality of supervisory stations;
coordinating communication between the self-checkout station and the plurality of
supervisory stations to enable a responding supervisory station to assert control over the checkout
station.

15. (Withdrawn) The method of claim 14, wherein:

the supervisory activity comprises a plurality of supervisory functions that can be
performed to administer operation of the checkout station;
a first one of the supervisory stations can conduct supervisory activities consisting of a
first subset of the supervisory functions;
a second one of the supervisory stations can conduct a second subset of the supervisory
functions; and,
the first and second subsets of the supervisory functions are different.

16. (Withdrawn) The method of claim 15, wherein:

at least one of the plurality of supervisory functions is common to the first and second
subsets of the supervisory functions.

17. (Withdrawn) The method of claim 14, wherein coordinating communication comprises:

receiving at a communications controller a first response from a first one of the supervisory stations and a second response from a second one of the supervisory stations;

enabling control over the checkout station in accordance with the first response; and rejecting the second response.

18. (Withdrawn) The method of claim 14, wherein coordinating communication comprises:

receiving at a communications controller a response from a first one of the supervisory stations;

enabling control over the checkout station in accordance with the first response; and transmitting a message from the communication controller to non-responding ones of the supervisory stations to cancel supervisory request outstanding at each of said non-responding supervisory stations.

19. (Withdrawn) A method of processing input at a supervisory terminal in a self-checkout system using a handheld supervisory device, the method comprising:

receiving a supervisory request at a handheld supervisory device, the supervisory request indicating assistance required at a checkout station;

processing the supervisory request to determine a sequence of input steps associated with receipt of input responsive to the supervisory request, where the sequence of input steps differs depending on content of the received supervisory request and on inputs entered at the supervisory device as said steps are processed;

displaying context-sensitive input displays on a supervisory device display; and altering the displayed information in response to data entry at the supervisory device.

20. (Withdrawn) The method of claim 19, wherein displaying context-sensitive input prompts on a supervisory device display and altering the displayed information in response to data entry comprises:

displaying information indicating data input required by a checkout station;

monitoring data input to detect entry of response data, a void input, a clear input, a cancel input, or an enter input; and

when a void input is received, displaying a prompt requesting input of response data relating to an item to void;

when a clear input is received, clearing a previously received response data input;

when a cancel input is received, terminating the monitoring;

when an enter input is received, determining whether received response data is valid and if the response data is valid, transmitting the response data to a checkout station.

21. (Withdrawn) The method of claim 20, wherein monitoring data input further comprises detecting entry of bar code information and, when said bar code information is detected, determining whether the bar code information comprises valid response data.

22. (Previously Presented) The system of claim 2, wherein:

at least one of the plurality of supervisory terminals is a shared terminal configured to conduct supervisory activities of at least two of the plurality of checkout stations.

23. (Previously Presented) The system of claim 3, wherein:

at least one of the plurality of supervisory terminals is a shared terminal configured to conduct supervisory activities of at least two of the plurality of checkout stations.